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Key Facts & Data Points

CMHO regularly publishes a collection of statistics about child and youth mental health in Ontario. These statistics and relevant research data support the case for significant

government investments into our sector.

We need your help. We're always looking for new sources of data. If you know of a good source of data that we seem to be missing, please let us know.

Spot an error? Kindly let us know and we will fact check.

Prevalence

- 1/2 of Ontario parents report having ever had concerns about their child's level of anxiety [\[21\]](#)
- 1/3 of Ontario parents have had a child miss school due to anxiety [\[21\]](#)
- 1/4 of Ontario parents have missed work to care for a child with anxiety. This is significantly higher among parents who have had concerns about their child's anxiety. [\[21\]](#)
- 62% of Ontario youth report ever having had concerns about their level of anxiety; only 3 in 10 (32%) have spoken to a mental health care professional about anxiety. [\[21\]](#)
- As many as **1 in 5 children and youth** in Ontario will experience some form of mental health problem.[\[1\]](#)
 - 5 out of 6 of those kids **will not receive the treatment they need.**[\[2\]](#)
- 70% of mental health problems have their onset during childhood or adolescence. [\[3\]](#)
- 17% of children ages 2-5 years meet diagnostic criteria for mental health problems. [\[4\]](#)
- 28% of students report not knowing where to turn when they wanted to talk to someone about mental health.[\[5\]](#)
- Canada's youth suicide rate is the third highest in the industrialized world.[\[6\]](#)

Challenges with the Current System

- 36% of Ontario parents have sought help for their child; of those who did, 4 in 10

didn't receive the help they needed or are still waiting for treatment [\[21\]](#)

- Half of Ontario parents who have sought mental health help for their child said they have faced challenges in getting the services they needed. The primary reason cited was long wait times (65%). Other challenges include: services don't offer what my child needs (38%), don't know where to go (26%), and don't offer services where I live (14%) [\[21\]](#)
- 76% families surveyed indicated it was very or extremely difficult to know where to find help.[\[7\]](#)
- 63% of youth point to stigma as the most likely reason to not seek help.[\[8\]](#)
- Poor transitions from youth to adult mental health services lead to disengaging from care in up to 60% of known cases.[\[9\]](#)

Investment

- Ontario's per capita investment in health care was found to be \$1,361 versus just \$16.45 for mental health.[\[10\]](#)
- Promotion and prevention efforts have been found to reduce demand for mental health and social services over an individual's life.[\[11\]](#)
- Improving a child's mental health from moderate to high can lead to lifetime savings of \$140,000.[\[12\]](#)

Identification and System Usage

- 73% of teachers agreed that anxiety disorders were a pressing concern
- A family doctor or pediatrician was the first place 62% of families who were surveyed turned to support their child's mental health.[\[13\]](#)
- Child and youth emergency department and hospital visits for mental disorders have risen by 54% and 60% over the last decade.[\[14\]](#)
- Despite a 17% increase in psychiatrists in Ontario between 2003 and 2013, the growth in demand for psychiatric services still outpaced the growth in supply.[\[15\]](#)
- In the last 30 years, hospitalizations for eating disorders have increased by 34%

among young women under 15.[16]

Equity Issues

- Black Youth are significantly under-represented in mental health and treatment-oriented services and overrepresented in containment-focused facilities.[17]
- First Nations youth die by suicide about 5 to 6 times more often than non-Aboriginal youth.[18]
- LGBTQ youth face approximately 14 times the risk of suicide and substance abuse than heterosexual peers.[19]
- Youth living in the lowest-income neighbourhoods had the highest rates of suicide, emergency department visits for deliberate self-harm, acute care mental health service use, treated prevalence of schizophrenia.[20]

[1] MHASEF Research Team. (2015) The Mental Health of Children and Youth in Ontario: A Baseline Scorecard. Institute for Clinical Evaluative Sciences.

[2] Ibid

[3] Government of Canada. (2006). *The human face of mental health and mental illness in Canada*. Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada

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[5] Boak, A., Hamilton, H., Adlaf, E., Henderson, J. and Mann, R. (2016). The Mental Health and Well-Being of Ontario Students, 1991-2015: Detailed OSDUHS findings (CAMH Research Document Series No. 43).

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[7] Parents for Children's Mental Health. (2013). Family Input Survey: A System that Truly Makes Sense.

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[9] Davidson, S. and Cappelli, M. (2011). We've Got Growing Up to Do: Transitioning Youth from Child and Adolescent

Mental Health Services to Adult Mental Health Services. Ontario Centre of Excellence for Child and Youth Mental Health.

[10] Lurie, S. (2014). Why Can't Canada Spend More on Mental Health? *Health*, 6, 684-690.

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[13] Parents for Children's Mental Health. (2013). *Family Input Survey: A System that Truly Makes Sense*.

[14] Canadian Institute for Health Information. (2016)

[15] Kurdyak, P., Zaheer, J., Cheng, J., Rudoler, D. and Mulsant, B. (2016) Changes in Characteristics and Practice Patterns of Ontario Psychiatrists: Implications for Access to Psychiatrists. *Canadian Journal of Psychiatry* (Published online before print, August 22, 2016)

[16] Ontario Shores. Mental Health Facts. Webpage: www.ontarioshores.ca/about_mental_illness/mental_health_facts

[17] Gharabaghi, K., Trocmé, N. and Newman, D. (2016). *Because Young People Matter: Report of the Residential Services Review Panel*.

[18] Centre for Addiction and Mental Health. Mental Illness and Addictions: Facts and Statistics. Webpage: www.camh.ca/en/hospital/about_camh/newsroom/for_reporters/Pages/addictionmentalhealthstatistics.aspx

[19] Canadian Mental Health Association - Ontario. Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans & Queer identified People and Mental Health. Webpage: www.ontario.cmha.ca/mental-health/lesbian-gay-bisexual-trans-people-and-mental-health/

[20] MHASEF Research Team. (2015) *The Mental Health of Children and Youth in Ontario: A Baseline Scorecard*. Institute for Clinical Evaluative Sciences.

[21] Ipsos Public Affairs. (2017) *Children and Youth Mental Health Survey: Getting Help in Ontario*. Webpage: <https://www.ipsos.com/en-ca/news-polls/CMHO-children-and-youth-mental-health-ontario>

Please note that our organization does not directly provide mental health services.

To find a Children's Mental Health Centre near you, [click here](#).

If you are in a crisis, please call 911 or go to your nearest Emergency Department.

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